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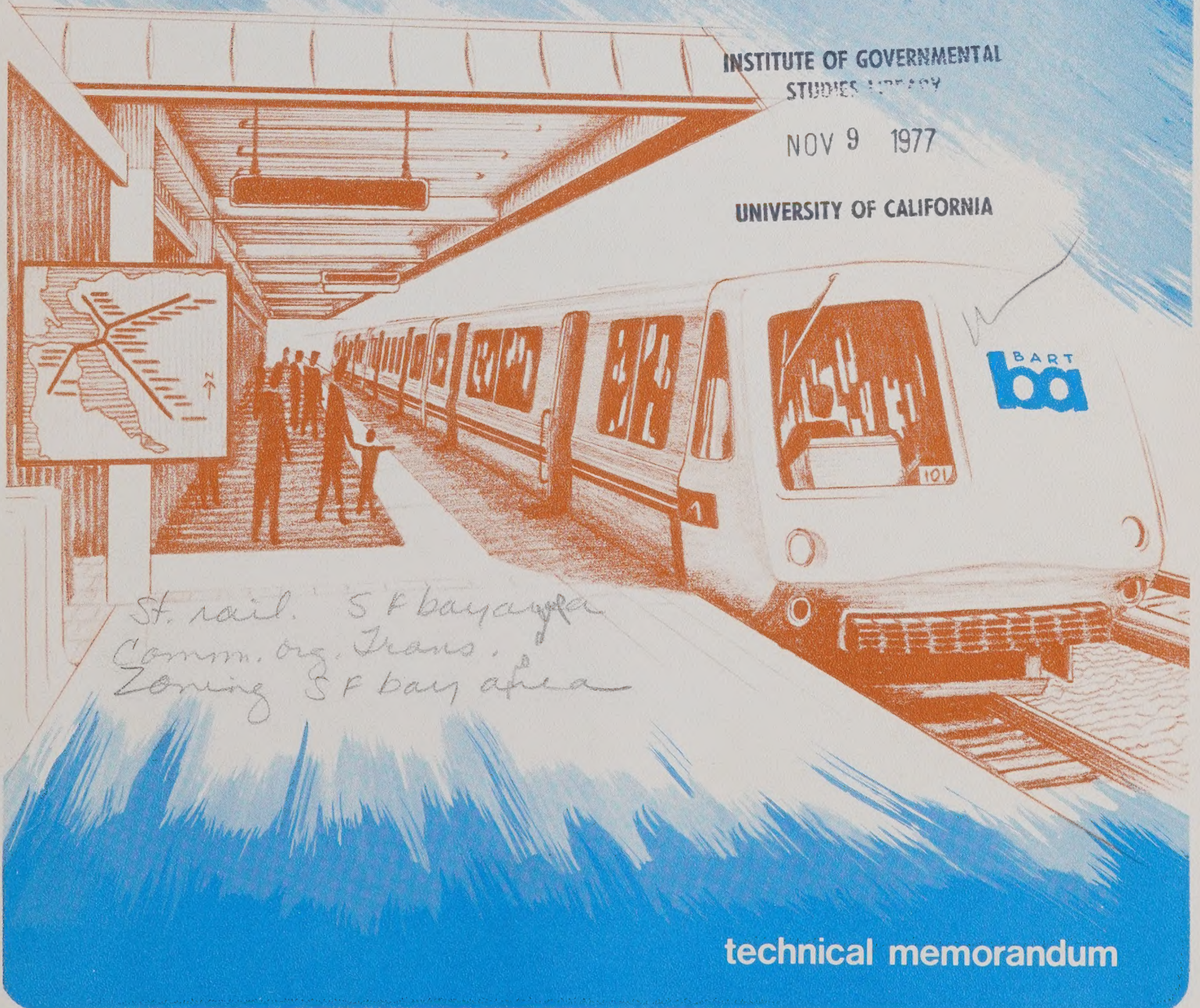
# bart impact program

## IMPACTS OF BART ON BAY AREA POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

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technical memorandum



The BART Impact Program is a comprehensive, policy-oriented study and evaluation of the impacts of the San Francisco Bay Area's new rapid transit system (BART).

The program is being conducted by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, a nine-county regional agency established by state law in 1970.

The program is financed by the U.S. Department of Transportation, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the California Department of Transportation. Management of the Federally funded portion of the program is vested in the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The BART Impact Program covers the entire range of potential rapid transit impacts, including impacts on traffic flow, travel behavior, land use and urban development, the environment, the regional economy, social institutions and life styles, and public policy. The incidence of these impacts on population groups, local areas, and economic sectors will be measured and analyzed. The benefits of BART, and their distribution, will be weighed against the negative impacts and costs of the system in an objective evaluation of the contribution that the rapid transit investment makes toward meeting the needs and objectives of this metropolitan area and all of its people.

BART IMPACT PROGRAM  
  
IMPACTS OF BART  
ON BAY AREA POLITICAL  
INSTITUTIONS



MAY 1977

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

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PREPARED FOR  
**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

AND  
**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**





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PREPARED BY  
**JEFFERSON ASSOCIATES, INC.**

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**METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

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## SUMMARY

### Introduction

This study of BART impacts on political institutions focuses primarily upon local community groups organized in response to problems and concerns generated by or attributed to and associated with BART.

In keeping with the larger aims of this study to investigate and analyze areas where BART impacts can be observed, two communities were chosen because they are extreme cases where BART coincided with the greatest amount of publicly visible political organizational activity. We were concerned with more than just the occasional neighborhood or community meeting of protest. The study focuses upon viable organizations that either surfaced around BART and directly related problems, or ones which, while already in existence at the time of BART's entry into the scene, quickly shifted a significant proportion of their energies towards political activity around BART.

BART stations were constructed in many communities in the Bay Area. In general, no sustained political activity accompanies BART's developments at the community level. However, we chose Rockridge and Mission/24th as our two sites precisely because they are exceptional. Thus, the study makes no claim to being representative in the sense of generalizability to what is happening in areas with emerging political constituencies focusing on the zoning and commercial shifts that accompany new urban mass transit stations. However, the study is designed to be representative of what would be happening if political activity were to emerge in what we will argue to be the two dominant types of communities most likely to mobilize local political community action.

### Research Approach

The social science literature of the last two decades on political participation reveals the general consensus that de Tocqueville's observations about nineteenth century America's penchant for joining organizations to further political ends are no longer valid. Indeed, empirical studies reveal that the bulk of the population belongs to no voluntary political organization. Closed and union shops account for almost the total or organizationally based participation of most Americans in economic and political life. Lipset, Trow, Coleman (1962) and a host of others have documented and commented upon the general abdication of the worker to a worker's representative for union affairs. The rank and file just does not go to union meetings.

Where we do find political participation, it is predictably class-related, centered around the more affluent among the middle and upper-





middle class. Scheler (1972), Weber (1974), and Ranulf (1964), all noted the tendency for this class to dominate organizational and bureaucratic activities even when they constituted a numerical minority, and to be the most likely class to organize so as to perpetuate and further their interests. In contrast, the upper classes are far less likely to use the public domain, and rather are inclined to lobbying and subtle persuasion through favors in economic transactions not visibly part of the public political process.

Wright and Hyman also summarize the literature on chronic working and lower class (and unemployed) non-participation in the political sphere of organizations as accountable both in structural and process terms. An important objective of the present investigation was to determine the nature and extent of organizational activity that accompanied BART's emergence and sustenance in a community, and the variable responses to this emergency by class. We assessed both the internal differentiation and effects of BART on the community, and the parallel issue of the effects of the community organization upon the political-economic processes at the local level. According to these considerations, we expected systematic class differences in the political response to BART's intrusion into a given community. The Rockridge area of Oakland was selected as the site for observing the middle-class response. The Mission District in San Francisco was chosen as the working-class site.

The methods used in the collection of data include interviews with key informants who are themselves participants in the political process, content analysis of official and unofficial documents obtained from the political organizations and from the planning and other relevant city commissions, review of local and regional published reports, and cross-checking of these reports with those interviewed.

### Findings

The theme that runs throughout both the Mission and Rockridge political ideology and understanding is a mistrust of the interests of the combination of BART and big developers. There is a perceived coalition of federal authorities, city politicians, large corporations, powerful real estate interests, and the construction trades. In every major city, this coalition has pushed for urban renewal, redevelopment of the central business district, and the redevelopment of local business centers or "malls." The interests of this coalition are at the least citywide, and in some cases, even regional and national. The critical point to attend to here is that they are not local in the sense of a primary concern for the continuity or integrity of the community or neighborhood that might be transformed by "development" or "renewal" or "modernization." At the federal level, the interest is to encourage cities to stimulate investments and to provide a system of transportation. For big business and chain stores, the interest is in taking advantage of land, write-downs and tax incentives, and in shaping a transportation system that

brings in as many consumers as possible. Where highways and other transportation networks are placed is seen to be the prerogative of this political and commercial coalition.

Indeed, key political actors in the communities under study extrapolated from their awareness of the official participation of chambers of commerce in highway planning, to assume BART's development sprang from a similar kind of coalition planning. We must not forget that BART is not seen as some isolated, fragmented, idiosyncratic development by these political actors. Rather, whether they are correct or incorrect, what they see in BART is another manifestation of this larger complex.

### Rockridge

The model of political organization and community pressure that Rockridge was to follow in 1970 was developed by one of its sub-communities two years earlier. The Telegraph Avenue Neighborhood Group (TANG) had pieced together its own strategy for dealing with the Oakland Planning Committee. In 1968, TANG created an organization of blocks with block captains, and neighborhood group representatives were established throughout the area. Leafletting brought residents to neighborhood workshops to assess and develop community opinion, and finally to draw up a policy position. This was basically the strategy adopted by Rockridge, with the emergence of the organization known as the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) in 1970. The RCPC developed a comprehensive land use plan for the Rockridge neighborhood. The distinctive feature of the plan was a downzoning of present single-family home areas to R-2 status. Land use plans for the commercial area near the BART station were also developed. These plans placed strict zoning and development constraints on commercial and residential development for the area proximate to the BART Rockridge station.

RCPC leadership comprises for the most part white professionals, well-educated and articulate, often married couples in their thirties and early forties. While they came from all over the community, most lived in the more affluent areas. Despite this selective dominance in the leadership, the organization was able to draw what appeared to be a representative cross-section of the community at the smaller neighborhood meetings. While older people certainly attended the meetings faithfully, the predominant group was under forty, and many were attorneys, craft professionals, and students, architects, artists, middle-management executives, social workers, planners, graduate students, and teachers from both public schools and the nearby university. Thus the community advocates were often the peers of the Oakland City Planning Department. They demanded respect as equals, and were able to construct a plan of sufficient professionalism ultimately to command that respect.

RCPC's lobbying techniques can generally be described as bombardment. Teams of people went to see city councilmen, letters were photostated



and sent to each councilman, and many residents prepared speeches for the meeting. RCPC also carried out an extensive letter writing campaign.

Since its zoning struggle, RCPC has become a small organization of concerned professionals. It is not currently operating as a large grass roots organization, but it has the potential of activating again on any large issue. RCPC has not been able to muster any real push to alleviate traffic problems, or to create open space in the area, but these issues do not represent an outside force against which the community can rally. The removal of commercial signs from the neighborhoods is a new concept in Rockridge and it is not at all clear that it will be accomplished. It remains to be seen whether RCPC will be able to effect positive new changes for the community.

RCPC has been an influential model for other neighborhood lobbying groups in Oakland, such as the Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League, the Fairview Park Neighborhood Association, the Bateman Neighborhood Association, and the Claremont-Elmwood Neighborhood Association. The concept of advocacy planning for neighborhoods has become more popular in the past few years and RCPC has set the pattern.

### The Mission

The burgeoning political organizing in the Mission in 1968 came from a nucleus that developed from three major strains: former field workers for the Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee, especially during the voter registration drives of the mid-60's; students and intellectual/political cadres active in the highly politicized strike at San Francisco State; and Alinsky-trained community organizers. While their backgrounds and training were highly divergent, what they held in common was a commitment to heighten the political consciousness of the Mission residents and to organize a community base with more at stake than the specific content of any one battle. What they explicitly agreed upon was the desirability to help shape and transform the economic and political disadvantage of the Mission. First, they organized around the real and immediate local problem of littering and using vacant lots as dumps. Many residents found this practice a visual nuisance, but no group had ever tried a systematic campaign to eliminate it. As the dumps began to get cleaned up, the group taking credit for the improvement emerged as an effective unit that could do the community better service.

A second Alinsky strategy employed was the utilization of already existent local leadership. In the Mission, as in working-class black urban areas, this was the church. The Archbishop had funded an organization called the Spanish-Speaking Council of Churches, which became a funnel to approximately thirty parishes in the area.

The organizers went to the churches and presented their program for block-by-block organizing around immediate and local problems. A broken street light, tardy or infrequent garbage collection, an unpaved segment or a hole in the street needing repairs were all matters upon which community service could generate further action.

These block clubs were organized to meet once a month, and were part of a federation of blocks and organizations that developed into the centralized Mission Coalition. From the beginning, the Mission Coalition was headed by a political elite that wished to pull its constituency along. As new issues came before the group, this elite bifurcated, then splintered into a variety of committees and programs that took it along more and more technical routes. When the Model Cities negotiations began in the Mission, it was the Coalition that sought to represent the people of the area.

The Coalition developed committees on health, community maintenance, planning, recreation, culture, finance, and employment. When it won the right to control the Model Cities Program, it gained indirect control over almost three million dollars. Not only did the organization win the right to select two-thirds of the membership of the policy board, but two-thirds of the Housing Development Corporation and two-thirds of the Hiring Hall Board. Its burgeoning technical responsibility isolated the elite from the larger constituency, yet, the Coalition won some significant battles through its spiraling committee structure. The Employment Committee has more accomplishments and controversy attached to it than almost any other committee. By mobilizing pickets, writing letters, petitioning, and direct negotiations, the Employment Committee obtains employer commitments to hire from the hiring hall. Hundreds of jobs have been distributed by this method, and it is this kind of success that pumps continual life into the organization. In an eight-month period in 1971, for example, more than two hundred jobs were distributed by the Hiring Hall on a first-come, first-served basis. There was no testing or screening, and employers included firms like the phone company as well as private corporations and the civil service. Residents could get credit points by attending designated meetings, working picket lines, and the like. After accumulating so many points, one could go to the hiring hall and use these points to get assigned to a new job opening. The federal government forced an end to this practice through a directive from HUD several years later, but it established a principle of participation and rewards.

Once construction of the station at Mission/24th was underway, the political struggle over land use around this station absorbed major attention from Mission political organizing elite and the relevant and interested committees. This struggle was to involve the largest number of mass participants at both the level of consciousness and collective action for a full year. The focus of community organizational activity



was the zoning status of Capp and Bartlett Streets, proximate to the Mission 24th Street BART station. Since 1960, these two streets had been zoned for commercial development. However, their present use status was primarily residential. Community organizers felt that if they could effect a re-zoning of these streets to residential use, large scale double-lot commercial development of Mission Street would be prevented. The fight became symbolically a struggle not over zoning, but over the fate of a place for the Latin people in the city of San Francisco. The area's history was celebrated by the political elite, who pointed out that the Mission spread out from a core of land around the Old Mission Dolores, settled several hundred years ago by the Spanish, and representing a legacy of spiritual and physical community. Because the Mission was not only organizing around jobs, but around culture, education, and "consciousness," the political elite could also point with pride and some success to the cultural and social renaissance of the area.

The Ad Hoc Committee to Rezone the Mission emerged in early 1974, and consisted of the Mission Planning Council and La Raza Centro Legal. The Mission Planning Council represented an interest in preserving the charming old housing in the area against redevelopment, characterized by the Chicanos/Latinos as one dominated by Anglos who wish to live in older housing. In some ways, this wing paralleled the Rockridge group. However, the difference represented by the predominantly ethnic and working-class character of the larger community is more important than the similarity. La Raza Centro Legal, on the other hand, consists of young law students and other pre-professionals with a strong ethnic identification and a political commitment rooted in the same ideology as that of the early initiators of Mission activism in 1968. The common interest of the two groups was to halt commercial expansion into residential sections of the Mission. Their fear was that big businesses would move into the area, build high-rise office buildings and multi-unit apartment complexes, and drive up property values and rents as the area increased in attractiveness and value because of the nearby BART stations. If Mission Planning was concerned more about the old Victorian houses, La Raza Centro Legal was concerned about preserving the cultural and political base to serve as a cohesive and coherent constituency of their drive for social and economic change.

#### Summary of Conclusions and Policy Implications

Political movements for social change (in technologically advanced societies of the twentieth century) can be seen as having three typical elements: 1) an elite or cadre actively engaged in political activity on a full-time basis with social change as their vocation; 2) intermediaries and functioning sympathizers with regular and routine connections to the social world, through their jobs or other commitments, who serve to inform and organize around specific issues; 3) a large mass or constituency. It is possible to classify political movements by the relationship

between these components, their size and autonomy. Some movements, as in the Mission later period have an extended, multi-nucleated heterogeneous elite. Other movements, as in Rockridge, have an extended, multi-nucleated heterogeneous intermediate component.

When middle-class groups mobilize, they are likely to have a relatively large group of part-time activists, and they can rely more heavily upon the larger constituency to supply a fluctuating level of part-time activism and voluntary professional skill. Such political groups are likely to witness a convergence or leveling of the differences between internal elements. The dominant ideology forces the leadership to remain relatively close to the constituency in both style and content of political expression.

When working-class ethnic and minority communities organize, they are more likely to rely upon the proliferation of elite, a relatively narrow base of part-time activism, and much more reliance upon the potential crisis mobilization of the larger constituency. The constriction of the middle level of activism means that there is less routine knowledge of the activities of the leadership, who must in turn engage in more interpretation of the will and interests of the constituency.

The nature of this difference can best be explained by a combination of the economic interest difference between the two community constituencies and the patterned differences in relationship to bureaucratic forms of organization. One lesson to planners is that mass transit may generate resistance to high density development, especially in older residential areas. Indeed, BART was a key element in the complex factors that induced the increased community spirit in these two places, albeit as a more negative model to "organize against" than policy makers might have wished. In Rockridge, local politics is now aimed at reducing street crime and automobile traffic, and this is a direct spin-off of the fight over the re-zoning issue. In the Mission, both the Centro Legal and Mission Planning Council continue to be concerned about the development of public park space for the area, and a range of community services and economic and cultural development objectives.

One clear policy implication is to actively seek the counsel of local residents, just as the counsel of the chambers of commerce is sought, when decisions to re-zone, develop, or place a mass transit station in or near a given residential area are being considered. Policy makers may need to establish a program for public interaction in the planning process in order to insure that all segments of the local community have a voice. This program should include systems for informing the public of the status and direction of current planning efforts, and incorporate a timetable for public review and comment on planning documents and related materials and evidence.



Another study finding with policy implications is that both the Rockridge and Mission groups organized against the perceived coalition of commercial interests and planning authorities. While it is true that the San Francisco planners turned out to be allies rather than enemies of the Mission groups, political mobilization was not based upon that fact. In fact, official efforts may initially generate a good deal of mistrust and suspicion about their motives for bringing in community groups (or seeking local opinions), but the conclusion from this study is that this should be done anyway. That is, the possibility of hostility and suspicion should be accepted as a given, not avoided, placated, mitigated or co-opted by design. It may occasionally turn out that such mistrust is not present, or that co-optation, avoidance or mitigation of public controversy results from bringing in community groups. But to enter the scene attempting to avoid dialogue is a mistake. Involving the public in the planning process is the best guarantee that alien interests don't simply ride through and over a community with the shibboleth of "development" and the not too thinly veiled motives of profit to beneficiaries based outside the community in question.

#### Policy Implications vs. Action Implications

There is an inherent bias in the notion of "policy implication" that needs to be addressed in these recommendations about political institutions. The idea of "policy" presumes an existing structure that can interpret and administer a set of findings, directives, or goals. In some instances this is obviously true, for policy is tied to those who are in the structural position to make or implement policy. Most people are not in such a position of course. Yet they have demonstrated the importance and relevance of their concerns and conclusions, even though they may be outside the realm of traditional, professional policy-making.

Finding out what community perceptions and conclusions are may relate more to what this paper calls "action," or the mobilization of non-official, non-governmental groups, or constituencies, than it does to conventional planning techniques. Moreover, many important implications get lost when everyone concerned is busily searching for the conduits of existing structures. It may be necessary to redesign the structure to meet the needs and divergent foci of particular communities.

Perhaps the most significant single policy implication of the present research then, is that mass transit authorities and planners create and develop an "action" wing or liaison whose function is to monitor and solicit the opinion of local constituencies.

## Research Approach

### A. Criteria for the Selection of Case Studies

We have chosen a predominantly white middle-class community and a predominantly minority working-class community. These are the two kinds of communities most likely to mobilize and represent the largest constituencies of potential mobilization. The very wealthy have other avenues to political power besides local community organizing. The most privileged classes have available to them business and professional associations with communications that rarely enter the public arena, even after the fact, and which are the more likely means of the expression of their political power. At the other end of the continuum, the poorest people have been the poorest at organizing in their own behalf, too involved with personal subsistence and survival to engage in collective action.

The Rockridge area of Oakland was selected as the site for observing the middle-class response. In June, 1970, the City of Oakland issued a report identifying Rockridge as having the highest development potential of any Oakland BART station, accompanied by a proposal for a six-story, 83-unit high rise apartment building in close proximity. In January, 1971, a meeting with the Planning Commission of the City of Oakland drew more than five hundred citizens from the Rockridge area to protest the lack of planning. A history of previous collective political organization around the Grove-Shafter Freeway and the continuation of activities oriented around BART from 1971, in a community with the designated class level, made desirable the selection of Rockridge as a case study site.

The Mission District in San Francisco was chosen as the contrasting working-class site. The hypothesized nature and direction of the expression of political anger and subjectively perceived impotence appeared to be present, as well as interesting ethnic and class differences. In the Mission, in sharp contrast to Rockridge, two community groups with quite different histories and interests joined to form an Ad Hoc Committee to accomplish rezoning in the area. The Mission groups fought to obtain rezoning so that what was already a commercially-zoned area ripe for expanded development would not further diminish or erode the remaining residential character of the neighborhood.

### B. Methods of Data Collection

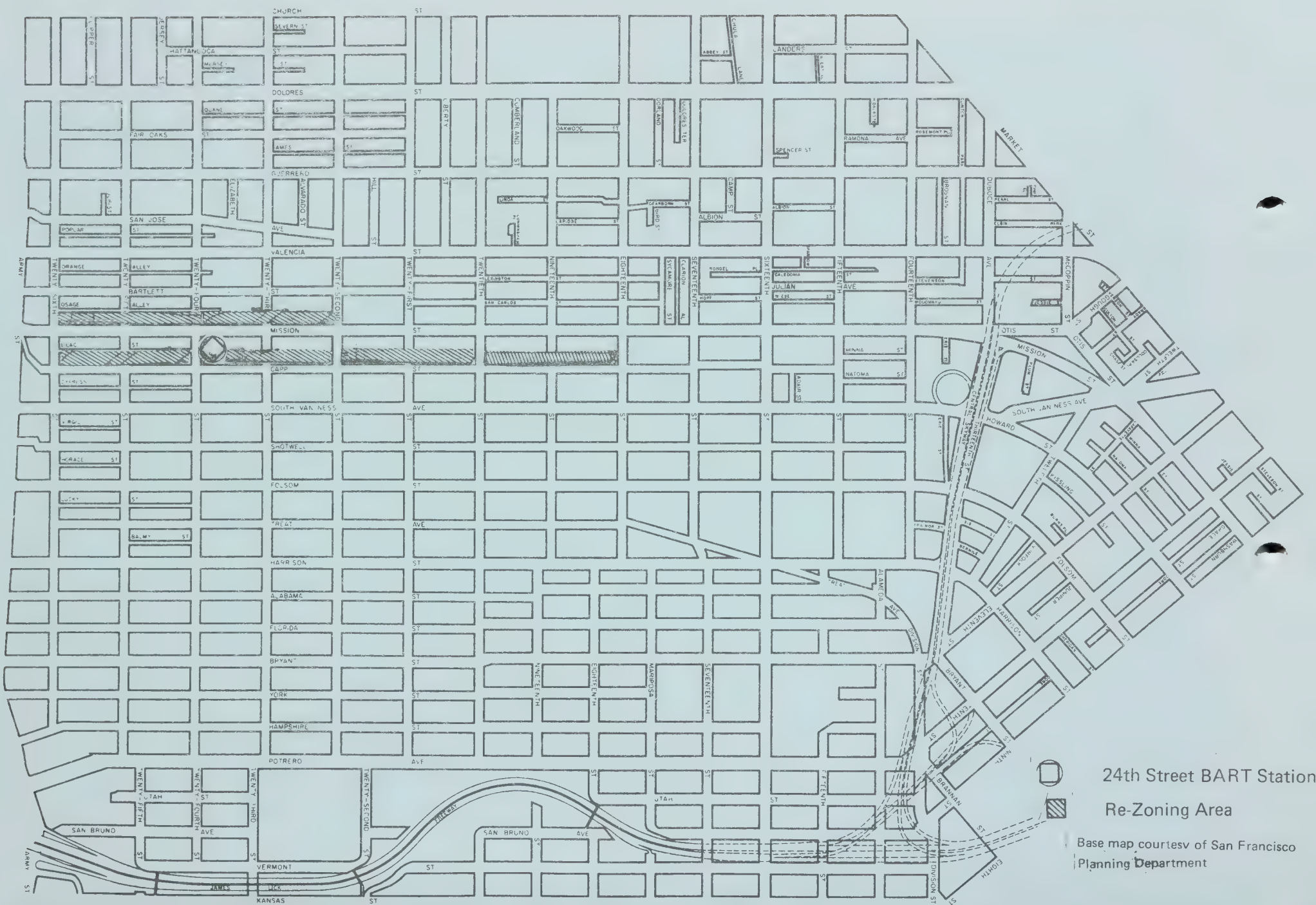
The methods used in the collection of data included interviews with key informants who are themselves participants in the political process, content analysis of official and unofficial documents obtained from the political organizations and the planning and other relevant city commissions, review of local and regional published reports, and comparisons of these reports with interview responses. Documents include but

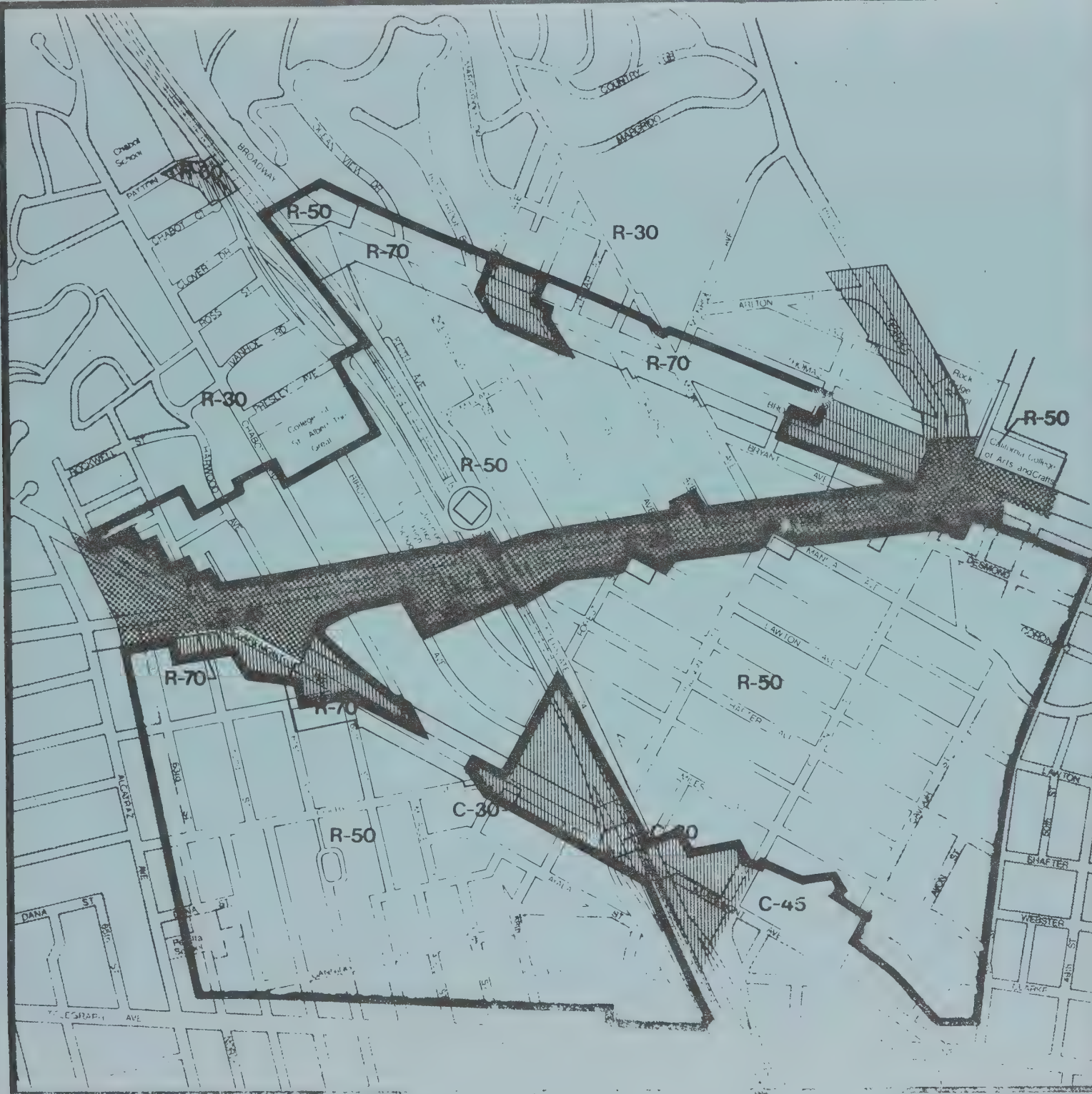
are not limited to the Rockridge Planning Council Newsletter, correspondence of the Fairview Park Neighborhood Association, the Skidmore, Owings and Merrill Report on the Landvale Interchange prepared for the Claremont-Elmwood Neighborhood Association, Skaburskis' doctoral thesis on land use in Rockridge, correspondence between La Raza Centro Legal and Mr. Dean L. Macris (then Director of Planning for the city of San Francisco), the Mission Housing Development's Plan for the Inner Mission, and reports of El Mundo and the San Francisco Progress.

Key informants included persons actively engaged in the political organizations under review. Because some of these informants asked to remain anonymous, comparatively few are specifically identified in this report.



## Greater Mission District



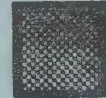


# Proposed Rockridge Area Rezoning

Rezone to R-35



Rezone to C-31




Rezone to R-30



Rezone to R-60/  
S-4



 Rockridge  
BART Station

October, 1974



OAKLAND  
CITY PLANNING  
DEPARTMENT

FIGURE 2





## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Scope and Objectives of the Research

This study of BART impacts on political institutions focuses primarily upon local community groups organized in response to problems and concerns generated by BART, or generally attributed to and associated with BART. It therefore matters less whether BART "really" caused these problems, more that it is perceived by the relevant political actors to have caused them.

In keeping with the larger aims of this study to investigate and analyze areas where BART impacts can be observed, two communities were chosen because they are extreme cases where BART coincided with the greatest amount of publicly visible political organizational activity. That is, since areas around BART stations typically witnessed no sustained political activity, a strategy that attempted to be representative would have revealed no impact of BART on the problem to be studied. (Study Design, pp. 73-77) Early project planning pointed us in the direction of impacts that were more than just an occasional neighborhood or community meeting of protest. We were searching for viable organizations, ones that either surfaced around BART and directly related problems, or ones that, while already in existence at the time of BART's entry into the scene, quickly shifted a significant proportion of their energies towards political activity around BART.

The study makes no claim to being representative in the sense of generalizability to what is happening in areas with emerging political constituencies concerned with the zoning and commercial shifts that accompany new urban mass transit stations. The study is designed to indicate what would be happening if political activity were to emerge in the two dominant types of communities most likely to mobilize local political community action.

Political activity is never a constant, and it ebbs and flows with events in a way that is not predictable from a study of isolated events. This suggests that the configuration of meanings plays as important a role as the events themselves. The important question addressed here is the context of these meanings for the capacity of a community to sustain political activity. Among the questions asked are: What have been BART's direct impacts on the political activity and political consciousness of the groups under study? What are some of the spin-off political activities that may have developed as a consequence of organizing around the more directly BART-related mobilization? How trivial or profound are these impacts, and what is the likely duration of the organizations

or groups? What are the stylistic and content differences between the two kinds of political organizations under review?

## B. Conceptual Issues and Research Hypotheses

In order to better understand the level of BART's impacts upon select political institutions in the Bay Area, it is important to frame the problem of local political activity in the larger context, both in time and with concentric circles that address the current prevailing regional/national political climate; the major thrust of ideology in the social and political movements that shape and inform the political activism under study:

During the 1960's, a dual political crisis unfolded in America's big cities. Across the country, neighborhood groups mounted campaigns to halt urban renewal, provide decent housing for themselves, and reclaim the public institutions which so strongly influence urban life. These groups squatted in vacant housing, stormed public hearings, mobilized thousands for marches and mass meetings, sat in front of bulldozers, and generally made life miserable for public officials. Starting in 1964, a series of ghetto rebellions swept from Cleveland, Watts, Newark, Detroit and Washington to dozens of other cities, generalizing this community based political crisis. (Mollenkopf, 1975, p. 247)

The shape of this "community revolution," as Daniel Bell and Virginia Held named it, was forged by two quite distinctive trends and classes, or collective interests. (Bell and Held, 1969) On the one hand, there was the Civil Rights Movement, starting out in the early 1960's as a force largely guided by liberal whites, but shifting to minority leadership by the end of the decade. The best chronicle of this development is the excellent account of the transformation of the Congress of Racial Equality (I. Bell, 1965). While Inge Bell concentrates on C.O.R.E., her close organizational analysis takes her into the links with the other wings of the movement. The picture that she portrays therefore encompasses most of the landscape and provides clear answers as to how and why Black Power emerged to render the old movement obsolete. A Saul Alinsky could organize Negroes on the southside of Chicago in the late 1950's and receive a generally responsive welcome, command respect for his skills as an effective political organizer, and export his techniques to other urban areas. But by 1970, whites were loathe to try to organize blacks around local community matters. (Ellis, 1969)

One of the reasons had to do with the difference in constituency and the corresponding implications of the strategies. Ellis shows that the

Alinsky strategy was to organize already existing black leadership, while the newly politically conscious were organizing the poor, at least so far as rhetoric and ideology are concerned. And as we shall see when we turn to the Mission, those who dismiss rhetoric and ideology in a social movement as "just so much talk" fundamentally misunderstand the way in which the publicly visible political behavior of movement leaders and constituents is bounded if not guided. The Black Power movement ramified, and there is a mountain of evidence in the literature indicating how it affected the Chicano, Puerto Rican and Native-American movements.

These considerations and our research objectives produced the following research hypotheses for the two primary constituencies in focus.

1. That middle-class communities will organize, or use existent organizations to resist BART-related developments which might alter the character of their communities.
2. That middle-class communities organize to preserve the status, privilege, character, and condition of communities.
3. That such efforts will be directed at lobbying with appropriate governmental bodies and agencies.
4. That governmental agencies and commissions will be conceived as basically responsive to demonstrations of wide-spread community sentiment.
5. That such agencies and commissions will be receptive to professionally developed plans created by the members of the indigenous population of the organized community.
6. That leadership in these communities possesses a level of expertise and information closer to that of the activist and constituency than does leadership in working class minority communities.
7. That working-class and economically depressed communities have far less political participation in the process concerning the entry of BART into their communities (than the middle class).
8. That mobilization of the larger constituency in such areas must begin on more transparently local and immediate issues than the delay of development and speculation by zoning.



9. That the leadership in such areas will be far more of a political vanguard than in middle-class areas.
10. That sentiment about BART is integrated with a complex structure of imputation of its interconnections with big business, big real estate, and developing interests.
11. Middle-class community-based organizations will sustain heterogeneous political activity around the preservation of conditions in their communities.
12. Working-class minority community-based organizations will sustain proliferated activity around the issue of the transformation of conditions in their communities.

At one level then, is the local community political activity of the poor and the minority working classes, organizing to change their condition, to improve it, to alter the system of rewards that can come from city hall. The core of this movement has come to view entrenched interests, and those it assumes to represent those interests, with profound suspicion. It has developed an ideology laced with mistrust of the Establishment, of any formal, official bodies of state, federal, or local agencies. We are interested primarily in those systematic perceptions of reality that focus and guide sustained political behavior. In order to understand the political behavior of these groups it is imperative to understand this feature of their ideology.

It is important to state that this is not a study of the political behavior of local agencies and planning commissions as a response to BART or in response to neighborhood political organizations. This particular investigation is primarily a study of sustained community political activity, and of the systematic perceptions that direct political behavior. While it may be occasionally instructive and valuable to portray "the point of view" of local governmental agencies and planning commissions, especially where these views are filtered through the lens of the groups under study, the motivation for such a strategy is the explanation of political mobilization among the community groups. It is not our intention in this document to specifically examine the basis or consequences of the perceptions and actions of local governmental agencies or planning commissions.

Watts, Detroit, and Selma helped move the country from Civil Rights to Black Power. This in turn helped to create the constituency of the Anti-War and Greening movements, the white Civil Rights activists displaced by the cry for blacks in leadership. (Levy 1968)

While the first constituency was primarily interested in altering their situation, the second was primarily concerned with preserving their way

of living against what they perceived to be large-scale, impersonal, mechanistic interests that have no desire to honor such things as "community" or "small-scale" decision-making to determine the course of local political outcomes. The interest of this group is either to create or preserve a community so that they can enjoy what they already have. Thus, for example, this group is likely to contain people who are already individually well enough off, but who seek some social or collective realization. Their attitude toward government agencies also differs from that of the former group in that this constituency presumes the efficacy of community appeals to the appropriate governing body.

Social science literature of the last two decades on political participation reveals the general consensus that de Tocqueville's observations about the nineteenth century America's penchant for joining organizations to further political ends are no longer valid. Indeed, empirical studies reveal that the bulk of the population belongs to no voluntary political organization. Closed and union shops account for almost the total or organizationally based participation of most Americans in economic and political life. And of course, Lipset, Trow, Coleman and a host of others have documented and commented upon the general abdication of the worker to a worker's representative for union affairs. The rank and file just does not go to union meetings (Hypothesis 7). Wright and Hyman also summarize the literature on working and lower class (and unemployed) chronic non-participation in the political sphere of organizations as accountable both in structural and process terms.

Where we do find political participation, it is predictably class-related, centered around the more affluent among the middle and upper-middle class. Scheler, Weber, and Ranulf all noted the tendency for this class to dominate organizational and bureaucratic activities even when they are a numerical minority, and to be the most likely class to organize in a manner so as to perpetuate and further their interests (Hypotheses 1 and 2). In contrast, the upper classes are far less likely to use the public domain, and are inclined rather to lobbying and subtle persuasion through favors in economic transactions not visibly part of the political process.

An important objective of the present investigation would be to determine the nature and extent of organizational activity that accompanied BART's emergence in a community, and the variable responses to this emergence by class. We sought to assess both the internal differentiation and effects of BART on the community, and the parallel issue of the effects of the community organization upon the political-economic processes at the local level.

We expected systematic class differences in the political response to BART's intrusion into a given community. We hypothesized, as in the research plan, that communities would organize around BART stations,

but with the important refinement about class differences (Hypotheses 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9).

Middle and upper-middle class communities with high proportions of professionals are likely to organize around any perceived threat to the stability of their community life, and to resist attempts that they feel might transform re-zoning laws (Hypotheses 1 and 6). We hypothesized that such organizations, formed for one purpose, would achieve a permanence and would transfer political interests and energies from one project to another (Hypotheses 5). Thus, while some organizations might have preceded BART, concern for the way in which BART affects the local community would occupy the greatest amount of the time and energies of such groups. As a parallel hypothesis, organizations formed around BART could ultimately shift their political participation to other issues and sustain a community-based group quite independent of BART-related matters (Hypotheses 11 and 12).

We also hypothesized about the nature of the political response and the kind of political participation (or lack of it) that might be expected from working-class, minority, unemployed, or economically depressed areas (Hypotheses 7, 8, and 12). It was decided to emphasize the study of grass-roots political responses to the emergence and development of BART. Accordingly, we looked for community organizations that were formed as a direct response to BART with the explicit goal of influencing policy about BART's operations (Hypothesis 1).

Community groups take on different form depending on a number of factors, including the issues around which they are formed, the length of their existence, and their success. We investigated the history of these organizations to observe the progression of political interests over time. For example, the community organization that emerges as a result of BART may begin to reach out into new political areas that are unrelated to BART. To the extent that this is true, BART may have created a network of political organizations that heighten the citizen's awareness of the political process (Hypothesis 8).

#### The Two Community Case Study Settings

The first of our studies was done in Rockridge, a relatively old community in the northeast section of Oakland. In this area, over half of the four thousand dwelling units are single-family, and 57% of the housing was completed before 1920. As late as 1960, a significant portion of the homes were still owned by families and descendants of the original owners. According to the County Assessor's files, only fifteen new family dwellings were completed during 1960 and 1975. The population is predominantly white, but there is a significant black minority population of about 13%, who reside primarily in the western portion of this neighborhood district. Family income is slightly above average,



with the median family income at the time of the 1970 Census at around \$12,000. Higher income families reside in the tracts above the BART station to the east while lower income families reside primarily to the west below College Avenue.

A 1969 Oakland Planning Study identified the area around the Rockridge BART station as suitable and desirable for high density commercial and residential development. The political movement which this report describes was organized around the perceived threat to the neighborhood and the neighborhood style of life that was seen in the plans for high density BART related development. The community movement has spanned a period of over seven years of activity. The community participants, organized around the leadership of the Rockridge Community Planning Council were ultimately successful in persuading the Oakland Planning Committee to downzone the Rockridge community residential area, as a final protection of the older, wooden-frame, residential character of the community.

The other site for the study was the Mission District of San Francisco. This area contains relatively old housing, and it is the center of the Latino/Chicano population in the Bay Area. Some Inner Mission census tracts are as high as 70 and 90% Spanish-surname.

Family incomes of Inner Mission residents are considerably lower than the 1970 San Francisco median of \$10,503. The percentage of family incomes at poverty level ranges from 13% to 22% among selected Inner Mission tracts, compared to 9.9% for the City as a whole. Almost twice as many Mission families have incomes from \$3,000 to \$6,000 as do families in the rest of the city.

The Inner Mission population is generally younger than that of greater San Francisco, and the continuing influx of new migrants to the area brings a larger percentage of younger family units with younger children. In the Inner Mission, 15.3% of the population is between the ages of 5 and 14 years, compared to 12.5% in San Francisco as a whole, and the median age in the Mission is 29.7 years, compared to the San Francisco median of 35.7 years.

The relatively low economic status of Inner Mission residents reflects the area's low level of owner-occupied housing units. The district offers few single-family residences; housing is primarily older, multi-unit buildings.

At the core of BART related political activity in the Mission District was the community movement to re-zone the areas of Capp and Bartlett Streets that border Mission Street between 18th Street and 26th Street. This area was zoned for commercial use in 1960 but its principal purpose of use at the time of the community movement was residential. Community activists sought to permanently re-zone the area for residential use to protect the present residential and small scale commercial character of the area.

## II. FINDINGS

### A. The Phenomenology of Political Participation

#### 1. The General Theme

The theme that runs throughout both the Mission and Rockridge political ideology and understanding is a mistrust of the interests of BART and big developers. Both the leaders and some of the constituents in these areas voice articulate and thoughtful understandings of the relationship between economic power and political power, between big business and government. Before we turn to the specific contours of that mistrust, it is worthwhile to review findings that permit a larger understanding of this relationship, and capture the essence of the dominant perceptions of the groups under study. What follows immediately in this section is a summary of conceptions of the world of big business and big government in their various manifestations as held by key participants in the local political process. No single party or group voices this composite position; rather, it is a distillation and synthesis of the whole.

#### 2. "Their" Interests and "Their" Motives

There is a perceived coalition of federal authorities, city politicians, large corporations, powerful real estate interests, and the construction trades. In every major city, this coalition has pushed for urban renewal, redevelopment of the central business district, and the redevelopment of local business centers or "malls." The interests of this coalition are at the least city-wide, and even sometimes regional and national. The critical point to attend to here is that they are not local in the sense of a primary concern for the continuity or integrity of the community or neighborhood that might be affected by "development," "renewal" or "modernization." At the federal level, the interest is to encourage cities to stimulate investments and to provide a system of transportation. For big business, chain stores and syndicates, the interest is in taking advantage of tax breaks, and in shaping a transportation system that brings in as many consumers as possible. Historically, this took the form of pushing for urban highway systems, and in the last two decades, billions of federal dollars have been spent helping to build these urban highways. In cities, the location of exits, entrances and arteries, are all seen to be the decisions of this coalition.

Indeed, that chambers of commerce were formally a part of the decision-making about where to put routes and interchanges is a fact known to several key political actors in both settings. They easily transpose

this knowledge to the workings of mass transit, and impute to BART and the constellation of economic and political power that produced it, the same manner and level of coalition planning and interests. It is therefore imperative that we not lose sight of the fact that BART is not seen as an isolated idiosyncratic development in which these political actors took part. Whether they are correct or incorrect, the community-based groups perceive BART as another manifestation of this larger complex.

While this common perspective of political interests and their motives underlies the understandings of both the Mission District and Rockridge District political activists, there is some differentiation in their expectations about the local planning and decision-making process. Rockridge District political participants are primarily middle-class, with a large percentage of skilled white-collar professionals in the planning, design, and engineering fields. The experience of community activists with the language, symbols, format, and procedures of the planning and design process provided them with an expectation of understanding and success in their dealings with city planning officials. Although they identify the same alliance of political interests as the Mission area activists, they bring from their experience an expectation that the official planning and zoning process will be somewhat responsive to their petitions and grievances. They are more likely to expect the outcome of the planning process to reflect their conceptions and their interests. In effect, their middle-class professional experience results in a class differentiated content to their expectations about the local political process. By way of contrast, the Mission area activists have less exposure with the planning and design process. They make no presumptions about their ability to influence its direction or its decisions. In effect, their understanding of the alliances of political interests and government policy makers colors their expectations about their part in the local planning policies. They did not expect or presume that their efforts would result in successfully influencing the policies of local government.

## B. The Rockridge Case

### 1. Rockridge's Local Community Politics and BART

Rockridge is a relatively old community in the north-east section of Oakland, bounded by Berkeley to the north, Broadway to the south-east, 51st Street to the south-west, and Telegraph Avenue to the north-west. Both its age and its communal character are signaled by its housing, distinctive in both appearance and age. Over half of the four thousand dwelling units are single-family, and fifty-seven per cent of the housing was completed before 1920 (Skaburskis, 1976, p. 6). Homes range from small two- and three-room bungalows to elegant and imposing seven-bedroom, two-story houses. Solidly built, many of these homes



display careful workmanship, hardwood floors, leaded glass, beamed ceilings, and imaginative fireplaces that indicate the labor intensity of an age past. The original homeowners from the first two decades of the century were white Protestants.<sup>1</sup> The wealthiest class lived in upper Rockridge to the east, the middle class straddled College Avenue, and the working class lived in lower Rockridge. The working-class area contained a large minority of Italian-American families and first-generation immigrants from Italy whose community centered around 51st and Telegraph Avenue (the Temescal District), and extended into lower Rockridge.

As late as 1960, a significant proportion of the homes in Rockridge were still owned by families and descendants of the original owners. According to the County Assessor's files, only fifteen new single-family dwellings were completed between 1960 and 1975. In the whole area, there are less than a dozen unused lots. It requires no advanced mathematics to deduce the importance consequence, noted by residents and outsiders alike, that any new housing means the destruction of older stock.

BART was to have an impact on the political consciousness, attitudes, and behaviour of the residents of Rockridge through a peculiar and circuitous route. When the decision was made to link BART literally to the Grove-Shafter freeway by running it down the median for several miles, BART became linked to the history and politics of the long and bitter freeway struggle. A brief review is necessary to reveal the continuity, coherence, and legacy of the Rockridge political struggle.

The story goes back to the period just after the Second World War, when marked demographic shifts in the Bay Area brought planners, politicians, and businessmen to an agreement about the need to provide greater access to downtown Oakland and San Francisco to dwellers of the increasingly dense residential areas. During this period, there was no serious thought of involving local residents in the planning process. Instead, plans were "leaked" or "rumored" for years before the final official unveiling of a fait accompli.

A plan to build a freeway to connect Contra Costa County with the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge was first proposed by the California Department of Highways, in cooperation with the federal government, in 1947. It was approved by the City of Oakland in 1948.

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<sup>1</sup>This section is greatly indebted to Skaburskis' doctoral thesis, especially chapters 1, 4, and 7, and to an unpublished case study of RCPC by Ellen Drogin, and to Kaplan, Gans, and Kahn, 1972.

But the residents of Rockridge heard only informal reports about a freeway to be built right through their community from 1949 to 1954. They formed local citizens' groups to request that they be permitted to participate in the planning for any such development. Both city and state agencies and their engineers sternly refused to permit any such participation, even in token form. For five long years the rumors went back and forth before the general public became aware of the master plan. In April, 1954, the State Highway Engineer met with the Oakland Chamber of Commerce and selected civic leaders, and advised them of the plans.

The location study proceeded during 1955 and 1956 and on December 19, 1956, the first public hearing was held in the Oakland Civic Auditorium. The State Engineers presented five alternative routes, recommending one. On January 17, 1957, the press first reported some community opposition to the plan. The Oakland City Council decided to acknowledge the citizens' protest with a moratorium, and asked for the submission of alternative plans. A dozen or so alternatives were drawn up hastily and sketchily during this next two-year period. Each was rejected in turn. However, a general public awareness had increased of the impending construction and some of its social and economic implications. The freeway dominated local political conversations of the period. The best evidence for this is that, by the time of the third public hearing with the State Highway Commission on March 25, 1958, there were 1000 residents in attendance. Nonetheless, on May 22, 1958 the State Highway Commission approved the original route for the Grove-Shafter Freeway. For the next few years North Oakland residents continued their fight in the courts. In September 1960, the North Oakland Home Defenders' suit to block the freeway was turned down by the state Supreme Court, and bids for construction were let.

Meanwhile, BART was being planned on a separate route from the freeway. In February, 1964, representatives of the Chabot Canyon Association, (bounded by Lake Temescal on the east and Broadway on the west) met with the State Highway Commission to protest the use of the Canyon for fill dump and to request an alternative BART design, preferably an elevated structure that would permit Temescal Creek and more of the Canyon to remain. The State Highway Division and the Bay Area Rapid Transit Division revised the design to one in which a) the rapid transit system would run in the freeway median, and b) the two systems would be re-routed along the side of the mountain. The request to preserve the Canyon was denied.

From now on it was the "BART-freeway" complex that offered to ruin the environment and the aesthetic quality of Rockridge and impose hardship on the households and firms who would be relocated.... More effective than

the Rockridge citizens groups were those in Chabot Canyon, an affluent neighborhood to the east. BART was to cross their residential area along trestle. The Chabot Canyon Association did not attempt to stop events but proposed alternative plans which were accepted in essence after residents threatened, and, in fact, planned a tax revolt. BART and the freeway were re-routed along the side of the mountain. (Skaburskis, 1976, p. 13)

The December 22, 1965 "Claremont Press" stated:

One of the reasons this group has been successful.... is that it has met the state and transit officials with feasible plans of their own. They have thought of what was best for the state and for the area, as well as for the general good of the public, when they made any recommendations. The Chabot Canyon area is fortunate in its resources; it has, as residents, many competent engineers, architects and other professional people to draw on.

As we shall see in the next section, the later struggle in Rockridge was to model after the Chabot Canyon experience.

There is an allied political history of struggle that also serves as a pivotal point of the present study. Up until the early 1960's, College Avenue and the Rockridge commercial area were dominated by small businesses locally owned and controlled. The giant Safeway supermarket chain bought three pieces of land and constructed three stores, all within less than a half-mile of what was to become the Rockridge BART station. Many residents began to grumble and complain during this period about what appeared to be a less than fortuitous configuration of events.

In January 1966, after freeway construction had started, attorneys for 'Lucky' stores requested a zoning change for their 67,000 square feet of assembled land abutting the north-west corner of the BART station site. They wanted to build a supermarket in this central lot.... Residents living in the area objected. The City Planning Department opposed the granting of the variance believing that a site so close to BART should be reserved for high density apartments. The Planning



Commission concurred. Lucky's attorneys argued that their store would not create traffic on the congested College Avenue but would simply service it. The zoning change would permit the establishment of modern commercial facilities in Rockridge and this change was in accordance with the guidelines of Oakland's general plan. Lucky's architect assured his audience that "the proposed market (a building covering 20,000 square feet of land) had been designed so as to have a residential character."

In March 1966, the City Council reversed the Planning Commission's decision by the required five vote majority after some apparently irregular maneuvering by the City Council which made residents suspect they had not had a fair hearing. The residents objected to the vote on grounds that one council member owned stock in Lucky's and that the Mayor, who was in the meat packing business, had business dealings with the chain. The strongest proponent for Lucky's, however, was Felix Chialvo, the elected at-large representative for Rockridge. The supermarket was built despite the objections of the residents, the Oakland City Planning Department and the Oakland Planning Council. (Skaburskis, p. 15)

Now, residents worried out loud about the collusion of powerful interests that did not care about the preservation of a neighborhood, but saw only opportunities for speculation, development, and profit. They pointed to the dissection of College Avenue's continuous old shopping area by the new freeway and BART. Some families began to leave the area, selling their homes and exiting with bitter words about these developments. This represents a microcosm of what has happened in many central cities of the United States, for to the west of Rockridge is a predominantly working-class and minority section that, by 1970, was heavily black. Had this area been more crowded, it would have pushed into West Rockridge, which would have pushed in turn eastward. The political and social "blame" for the transformation of the old neighborhood would not have been shouldered by the planners, speculators, and developers, not by Safeway and Lucky, but by the succession of the new working class.

When the freeway construction was completed in November, 1970, it had destroyed 1,400 pieces of property, mostly homes. Many of the old businesses along College Avenue departed, and in mid-1971, some of the

shops along this row stood empty.

The 1970 census reveals that there was a significant increase in the black population in Rockridge, but the community was still "whiter" than the city of Oakland as a whole. The proportion of whites in the city is approximately sixty per cent, but in Rockridge, it was eighty per cent even with the inflow of blacks.

But the demographic transition was not simply the migration of older whites to the suburbs and the succession of minorities. Rather, a significant number of young professionals began moving into the area. They were attracted by the quality and unique character of the housing, the proximity to Berkeley and the easy access to San Francisco. Young lawyers, accountants, architects, and advanced graduate students with working spouses were among those who moved into this area during the period. The report by Gruen and Gruen also notes that the figure of self-employed people was significantly higher, about two and one-half times higher for the upper and middle sections of Rockridge than the rest of Oakland. Also, the middle and lower-income residents were paying a larger part of their income on housing than in the rest of the city. These facts indicated to Gruen and Gruen that they were there by "choice." The number of Rockridge residents in professional and managerial positions is well above the rest of the city.

This new element in Rockridge, younger, highly-educated professionals, pre-professionals and their spouses represented a new source of political leadership in the community-- and, of course, a new constituency. Many of them brought with them the political experience and rhetoric of the 60's, a verbal celebration of "participatory democracy" and the "right to have an important say about controlling their own lives." They recoiled at the idea of "running to the suburbs to avoid living next to minorities," and prided themselves on this difference between themselves and the older generation. The latter were quite distrustful of the newcomers at the first instance. Longer hair, beards, rumors of marijuana, foreign cars and old pick-up trucks were generally disturbing. Still the two generations shared an important and ultimately over-riding orientation, fear that the small shops and the local and communal character of the neighborhood would be destroyed by "outside elements." A recurring phrase about Rockridge from residents interviewed is that it is "an urban area with the feel of a small community." The ogre that scared them most was the bulldozer. And while the older residents had a vague and general sense of what those "outside elements" that threatened the community were, the younger set often had an articulate version of the inter-connection between economics and politics.

In the battle lines that had been drawn for the coming fight, it is crucial to take special note that varying segments were often fighting a symbolic war that centered upon safeguarding not just their personal

property, but a quality of community life that they felt was generally threatened in the United States. "Development" was the natural enemy. The recent experience with the freeway had demonstrated to them that the city was not easily won over to their side. They were now seasoned enough to anticipate a protracted struggle that would require sophisticated political techniques and strategies.

## 2. The Formation of the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC)

During the Planning Department's round table discussions on BART, some participants repeatedly emphasized the natural advantages of the Rockridge station area for high-rise apartment development. Of all the BART stations outside the Oakland Central District, this area was described as the one most attractive to investors in residential building. Emergence of a high-density urban sub-center related to the station would be a dramatic alteration of the area's prevailing low-density character. Such an alteration appears necessary and desirable to capitalize upon the high transportation capacity of the BART system, to take advantage of the rejuvenating investment interest resulting from it. However, the implications of this kind of density changes should be traced to avoid destruction of the area's basic residential appeal. (Skaburskis, p. 23)

Skaburskis noted how the north-east quadrant of the BART station area was designated for the development of high-density apartments. Lot sizes in this quadrant were large, almost double the 4,000 square-foot average. This quadrant had the lowest density zoning in Rockridge, a community that the planners had already noted was the only "non-poverty" designated residential area in Oakland near a BART station. According to Skaburskis, the Planning Department feared that some developers might come in and waste this valuable land with medium-density development. What was desirable was high-density structures, and he cites the following passage from an Oakland City Planning Commission report:

Intensification of land use should occur in planned stages; rather sharp contrasts in allowable density could be justified,... to encourage development of the most suitable high density site first, while single-family areas would be preserved until a distinct market becomes evident for truly high-density development. This could establish a system so that transition zoning would not create a belt of medium density apartments just beyond the initial high-density district, thus freezing the holding capacity in the transition zone for the next 20 to 30 years. (Skaburskis, p. 24)



In 1970, an architect who lived in the area requested a variance from the City Planning Commission for a seven-story, 83-unit apartment building to go up in the very quadrant recommended by the planning department cited above. In June, a pro-development group called the Rockridge Neighborhood Council (RNC) supported this request by petition. In November, RNC issued its report to the City Council, but the College Avenue Merchants Association (CAMA) and the Chabot Community Council issued a joint statement calling for planning to precede development. Between November and early January, residents of Rockridge met in small neighborhood groups to discuss strategy for opposing the variance request. When the Oakland Planning Commission met on January 31, 1971, it was faced by the largest crowd ever to attend one of its meetings. Between four and five hundred persons, almost completely anti-development, came out specifically to protest the Birch Court plan for the high-rise apartment complex. They opposed ad hoc and piecemeal development and requested a different and more comprehensive plan. On January 31, 1971, the various neighborhood groups coalesced into one, and named themselves the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC).

### 3. The Organization and Mobilization of Political Participation in Rockridge

RCPC evolved a structure that was extremely effective in its ability to search out a consensus in the community. It did not take a position until it had drawn up a thorough and complete plan which satisfied most elements in the local community. However, when RCPC formed, it had to develop a new organizational structure. The core of the neighborhood people who had fought the freeway were either inactive, displaced, or had moved.

There were neighborhood organizations in Berkeley, but in Rockridge, there was only TANG, the Telegraph Avenue Neighborhood Group, which was about two years old in 1970. TANG had developed a style for dealing with the Planning Commission, and they passed this on to RCPC. TANG supplied the RCPC with its tactics for community organizing. Neighborhoods were divided into city blocks and block captains were named from volunteers, appointed, or elected as the individual situation dictated. Then, before appearing at the door-step for canvassing or soliciting attendance at meetings, preliminary leafletting was the practice. This gave residents a clear idea as to the time and purpose of a visit from a member of the organization, and greatly increased receptivity.

The blocks were grouped into six neighborhoods, with each neighborhood sending two representatives to the RCPC Board of Directors. While block meetings varied considerably in frequency, neighborhood workshops were rather well coordinated, and were used to inform the most active residents of central issues and problems. The communication was two-way, however, and the workshops were initially used to assess and develop community opinion, and finally to draw up a policy position.

The Board of Directors prepared recommendations and coordinated information between neighborhoods, but did not make policy decisions. These decisions were reserved for the General Assembly, a meeting open to the entire community. There was no formal or official membership, and anyone who attended a meeting was treated as a voting member. Attendance at an average assembly would be about fifty, but when major policy decisions were needed, considerable district-wide publicity and discussion preceded the meetings, and attendance averaged closer to three hundred persons. RCPC found what urban sociologists have found in other communities, namely, that a large minority of people prefer to work and attend meetings in their own neighborhood, but will not participate in large, open meetings. This was especially true of the age group over 60, who provided considerable support at the block level. And for those who could not attend meetings, and where issues were deemed sufficiently important, polls were used. (On the zoning issue, there were nearly 2,000 responses to the poll, according to RCPC officials.)

What began as an ad hoc group of a dozen or so members, devoted solely to a development plan blossomed into a broad-based community organization dealing with projects as divergent as garbage collection, street-lighting, crime prevention, tree-planting, and traffic planning. Several working committees attained semi-permanent status.

The council relied heavily upon volunteer participation and in four years maintained a budget of no more than seven hundred dollars. Yet, communication was extensive, with ordinary distribution of meeting notices to virtually every household.

The most important committee in RCPC is the Design Review Committee, the watchdog committee for the zoning. It was formed after the zoning was approved. There are twelve members, comprising an equal number of merchants and residents, the latter mostly architects, city planners, and lawyers who respond to conditional use permits as they come up. They critique design and even give color suggestions.

"The zoning administrator (city) decides if something should be referred to us. The city is happy to give things to us. They don't want to cross us. We are a service to the city, they already have too much to do." (Ted Burton)

RCPC's lobbying techniques can generally be described as bombardment. These were techniques passed on to them by TANG, and their effectiveness was dramatically demonstrated by the Fairview downzoning, in an area of only four blocks. Teams of people went to see city councilmen, and many residents prepared speeches for the meeting.

RCPC also carried out an extensive letter writing campaign. It took out an advertisement in the Claremont Press (November 28, 1974), to urge residents to write letters. They also developed "street letter petitions," and worked to get good participation at meetings. For the big City Council meeting, they obtained a bus to transport people. This was mainly for the older people in the area.

RCPC used its own resources to draw up plans, rather than relying on the city to do so. They had undertaken the cost and effort themselves and had something concrete and important to show the city. They are continuing this technique for a traffic plan and considering the idea of drawing up their own street plan for diverters.

The leadership cadres within RCPC were composed for the most part of white professionals, well-educated and articulate, often married couples in their thirties and early forties. While they came from all over the community, most live in the area from College Avenue to the hills. They were attorneys, professional craftspersons and students, architects, artists, middle-management executives, social workers, planners, graduate students, and teachers from both the public schools and the nearby university. These persons were often the peers of the Planning Department. They demanded respect as equals, and were able to prepare a plan that had the necessary professionalism to achieve that respect.

During the first three years of its existence, RCPC was consumed by three problems: a planning study and the attendance quest for funds to support it, a community consensus around such a plan, and the formation of a structure of organization and political participation. There were conflicting opinions within the community as to the effects of BART on property values. While the College Avenue Merchant's Association (CAMA) took an early positive position for redevelopment and re-zoning, they pledged cooperation with RCPC and its efforts to get a comprehensive plan.

RCPC went before the Planning Commission every two or three months requesting extensions, and made several requests to the City Council for funding for a planning study. During this period there was no immediate threat of commercial or high rise development in Rockridge.

RCPC organized a major community meeting for April 17, 1972, widely publicized by door-to-door leafletting, posters in the stores, and notices in the school and neighborhood newspapers. Over 300 people attended. There was an impressive slide show of before-and-after freeway shots, and vivid illustrations of the development threat. A petition circulated requesting funding for a study. "We knew the 701 funds\* for a study were there, we just had to show them that we were

\* During this period 701 funds were available from HUD for community planning studies as a first phase of community redevelopment.



serious and that we would not go away. They had been holding the 701 funds before us like a carrot on a stick." (Ted Burton) A vote was taken at this meeting in favor of a building moratorium. Four City Councilmen were at the meeting.

In August, 1972, the City Council located the 701 planning funds from HUD to do a limited study of the economic development of Rockridge's BART Station area.

In September, the City Council asked the Planning Commission to initiate a moratorium. In October, the Planning Commission refused to take a stand. In December, the City Council rejected the moratorium and ordered the planning study. During this time RCPC had still not received strong merchant support.

In the spring of 1973 the contract for a study was signed with Gruen and Gruen and Associates. In late 1973 the Gruens presented their report, suggesting five alternatives for the neighborhood:

1. minimum growth, maximum preservation;
2. scattered low-rise apartments;
3. low-rise development west of College Avenue;
4. high-rise apartment clusters around the BART station;
5. high-rise density and redevelopment around the BART station.

All the alternatives suggested a San Francisco "Union Street" theme\* for the retail area. The study showed that all forms of development could work in Rockridge, and that the area could easily support heavy commercialization. It indicated that without planning, the present character of the area would deteriorate. "The Gruen and Gruen study scared people to take action." (Elizabeth Chiera)

In early 1974 RCPC began to reorganize. "Having realized that the City was not going to do a plan for us, we began efforts to put together an effective organization which would be able to communicate with all sectors of the community effectively. We defined six major sub-neighborhoods, gave them names, and helped them to select board members and organize a communications network. We formed a general assembly structure. People were enthusiastic, and the work proceeded rapidly. We began to print newsletters." (Burton)

It is worth noting that at this time there was a good deal of neighborhood political activity in the area. The North Oakland Mayfair market

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\* Union Street is a "bar and boutique" commercial area in San Francisco. It is characterized by a scattering of small specialty shops, restaurants, and food stores. The area clientele are predominantly young, single, white-collar workers.

was successfully boycotted in June 1973, and 75% of its business was cut out. The Temescal section of Oakland formed its own neighborhood residential group, and successfully achieved down-zoning. The Claremont-Elmwood Neighborhood Association began to get traffic diverters for its neighborhood and launched an active though unsuccessful campaign to stop a "7-11" store from opening on College Avenue.

On March 7, 1974, RCPC formally asked CAMA to join them. CAMA formed a committee to respond.

In April, the Fairview Park Neighborhood Association of North Oakland (located below College Avenue and wedged into Berkeley on three sides), succeeded in getting its area downzoned. Their battle took only a few months, and centered around a conditional use permit application for a doctor's office on a residential street. The residents used the strategy of bombarding the City Planning Commission and the City Council with letters, appointments and petitions.

After the Fairview re-zoning, the Planning Commission was more sensitive to Rockridge re-zoning, related Marge Gibson (Oakland City Planning Commission member). "The whole thing mushroomed and we started to look at the whole area."

In June, 1974, the owner of a vacant lot on College at Harwood proposed to lease his lot for a franchise of Taco Bell Drive-In. Residents and merchants were appalled.

Because we were well organized and in the process of planning a major neighborhood meeting, we were able to act quickly. A massive out-pouring of people, combined with some excellent work by volunteer attorneys, resulted in the City's adopting a building moratorium just two weeks after the controversy started. (Burton's Sierra Club report)

#### 4. RCPC Develops a Zoning Plan

In May and June, 1974, neighborhood workshops attended by City Planning staff were set up to discuss the Gruen and Gruen report. The merchants had a separate workshop. During the summer they began to work out zoning plans.

We worked hard to accept compromises.... People considered the issues of traffic noise, open space, and many others. The final result of our efforts, which involved direct participation of many hundreds of

residents and merchants, was a plan with some very sophisticated new zoning proposals. The residential zones provided for some new apartments, while preserving good single-family areas. Flexibility was sought through design review and use permit procedures. The new commercial zoning mandated a pedestrian-oriented commercial district, with specialty shops on the ground floors of all buildings. Auto-oriented business was banned, and parking was severely controlled. Design review, landscaping, and other important items were included. (Burton's Sierra Club report)

The City Planning Commission had to devise a new zoning design for the RCPC plan. The City even went a few steps further. They called for the removal of all billboards and flashing signs within three years.

In October, 1974, the Planning Commission hearing was held. Five hundred people attended and supported the plan, and it was approved 6-0 by the Planning Commission in November. In December, the City Council met and approved the plan 6-1, with the billboard industry and Mayor Reading strongly opposed.

### C. The Mission Case

#### 1. The Community Setting

The Inner Mission population is generally younger than that of greater San Francisco, and the continuing influx of new migrants to the area brings a larger percentage of younger family units with younger children. In the Inner Mission, 15.3% of the population is between the ages of 5 and 14 years, compared to 12.5% in San Francisco as a whole, and the median age in the Mission is 29.7 years, compared to the San Francisco median of 35.7 years. A large percentage of this younger population is of Latin origin, some 21.7% of the Mission versus 12.5% in San Francisco as a whole. However, several Inner Mission census tracts are as much as 70% to 90% Spanish-American or Latino, based on the 1970 Census.

Family incomes of Inner Mission residents are considerably lower than the 1970 San Francisco median of \$10,503. The percentage of family incomes at poverty level ranges from 13% to 22% among selected Inner Mission tracts, compared to 9.9% for the City as a whole. Almost twice as many Mission families have incomes from \$3,000 to \$6,000 as do families citywide.



The relatively low economic status of Inner Mission residents reflects the area's low level of owner-occupied housing units. The district offers few single-family residences; housing is primarily older, multi-unit buildings. With the Capp and Bartlett Streets area of 170 lots subject to re-zoning, the San Francisco Victorian Alliance identified 80 Victorian structures-- some dating back to 1880. According to a survey conducted in 1972 by the Model Cities Organization, 14% of the housing units in the Inner Mission are in need of major repairs; 84% were built before 1940. The limited availability of single-family homes and the very low areawide vacancy rate are key features of the contextual background for the community's struggle to re-zone the Capp and Bartlett Streets area as residential.

Further, since the Mission population contains a large percentage of children, a great need also exists for larger residential flats. The Capp and Bartlett Streets area contained primarily three-unit residential structures. The proponents of rezoning feared that BART development would lead to razing of the older housing stock rented to families to make room for new, single apartments proximate to the Mission-24th Street BART station.

Between 1960 and 1971 the Inner Mission district experienced a net loss of 175 buildings of available single-family and two- and four-unit dwellings. Given the prevailing shortage of residential housing, the growing population and the young family character of Mission residents, a considerable reservoir of potential popular support awaited organizational attempts aimed at assuring a supply of family residences for lower-income Mission families.

## 2. The Context of Political Mobilization in the Mission

The organization that was to become the Mission Coalition germinated early in 1968, the outcome of long-range thinking and planning by political visionaries fresh from recent national and local political struggles. In particular, part of the nucleus of this group were veterans of the Civil Rights Movement. Black Power, the Black Panther Party, the Young Lords, and the Brown Berets were grabbing the headlines and the public consciousness. For the Chicanos and Latinos who shunned the more spectacular route of uniform dress and para-military paraphernalia, local community organizing was the apparent natural conduit for their political energies.

When the big strike at San Francisco State College occurred in the fall of 1968, the residual power of the strikers was their capacity to invoke a nearby constituency that supported their demands, and who in turn they could claim they represented in the interests of an "internally colonized Third World." Hunter's Point and the Fillmore were the bases for the black claim, Chinatown and Japan Town for the Asians, and the Mission

for the Chicanos/Latinos. Indeed, there was overlap between the burgeoning political organizing in the Mission during this period and the key actors in the State College strike. The nucleus had developed from three major strains: former field workers for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, especially during the voter registration drives of the mid-60's; students and intellectual/political cadres active in the highly politicized strike at S.F. State; and Alinsky-trained community organizers. While their backgrounds and training were highly divergent, they shared in common a commitment to heighten the political consciousness of Mission residents and to organize a community base with more at stake than the specific content of any one battle. What they explicitly agreed upon was the desirability of shaping and transforming the existing economic and political disadvantage of the Mission.

Before they would get to the stage of talking about jobs and the economy or planning and redevelopment, these organizers understood that they must first tap into the community on issues that had local resonance. They employed two strategies that are typical with Alinsky trainees. First, they organized around a "real and immediate and near-universal" problem and experience. In the Mission, that was the problem of the vacant-lot/littering-ground. During this early period, one of the common annoyances in the area was an empty lot that some parts of the community would use to dump their unwanted items. Many residents found this a visual nuisance, but it had no status beyond grumbling and private complaints. No group had ever tried a systematic campaign to eliminate the "dumps."

Now the coalition of Alinsky-trained and college-educated activists surfaced, with a university research group pinpointing civic sources, agencies, and formally responsible parties from which "the community" might get some satisfaction on this issue. Slowly but effectively the dumps began to get cleaned up, and the group standing ready for the credit emerged as an effective unit that could do the community better service.

A second Alinsky strategy employed was the utilization of already existent local leadership. In the Mission, as in working-class black urban areas, this was the church. The Archbishop had funded an organization called the Spanish-Speaking Council of Churches, which became a funnel to approximately thirty parishes in the area. The organizers went to the churches and presented their program for block-by-block organizing, around immediate and local problems. A broken street light, tardy or infrequent garbage collection, an unpaved segment or a hole in the street needing repairs, these and other matters were the grounds upon which community service could generate further action.

### 3. Organizational Structure of the Mission Coalition

Block clubs, formed during the early years with the assistance of the church, continued to mobilize around issues such as street lights, garbage in vacant lots, and holes in the asphalt pavement on the streets. These block clubs met once a month, and were part of a federation of block organizations that developed into the centralized Mission Coalition. Attendance at the meetings varied, but in order to increase attendance, delegate strength to the Mission Coalition was measured by the strength of membership in these block clubs. Block captains were therefore encouraged to do strong organizing. Later, as will be seen, the organization was to use a different and more effective tactic for getting people out for meetings: the real possibility of employment.

From the beginning, the Coalition was headed by a political elite that wished to pull its constituency along. As new issues came before the group, this elite bifurcated, then splintered into a variety of committees and programs that took it along more and more technical routes. When the Model Cities negotiations in the Mission began, it was the Coalition that would assert its solitary representation of the people of the area, and claim broad legitimacy.

The Coalition developed committees on health, community maintenance, planning, recreation, culture, finance, and employment. When the Coalition won the right to decisive influence in the Model Cities Program, it gained control over almost three million dollars. Not only did the organization win the right to select two-thirds of the membership of the policy board, but two-thirds of the Housing Development Corporation and two-thirds of the Hiring Hall Board as well. As these boards and committees proliferated and specialized, the technical knowledge required to manage routine operations reached a point where the average citizen would have to spend days becoming familiar with the bureaucratic structure in order to be able to ask meaningful questions. While this further isolated the elite from the larger constituency, the Coalition won some significant battles through its spiraling committee structure. A few examples should serve to illustrate how rapid and effective a development there was in the short span of three years, since all of the victories recounted here occurred between the beginnings of the organization in 1968 and mid-1971.

With the possible exception of the Planning Committee, the Employment Committee has more accomplishments and controversy attached to it than any other committee. By mobilizing pickets, writing letters, petitioning, and direct negotiation, the Employment Committee obtained from employers a commitment to hire an agreed upon number of persons sent by the Hiring Hall. Hundreds of jobs were distributed by this method, and this success pumped continual life into the organization. In an eight-month period in 1971, for example, more than two hundred jobs



were distributed by the Hiring Hall under a first-come, first-served basis. There was no testing or screening, and employment was channeled to private firms like the phone company, to private corporations, and to civil service.

The Employment Committee engaged in a practice to increase participation in meetings and organizational activities that amounted to credit points. Residents could get points by attending designated meetings, working picket lines, and the like. With the accumulation of points, one could go to the hiring hall and use these points to get assigned to a new job opening. The federal government forced an end to this practice through a directive from HUD several years later, but the Coalition had established an important principle of participation and rewards.

There was also a Housing Committee which investigated complaints from local residents about their landlords, and frequently advised them of their rights as tenants. In some instances where landlords would not respond to gentle pressure for repairs, the Housing Committee would mobilize a picket, then engage in direct negotiations in behalf of the tenants.

The Recreation Committee mobilized over a hundred people to City Hall for a demonstration in favor of an expansion of Garfield Park, and lobbied successfully to have soccer goals installed in Folsom Playground. The Consumer Committee heard complaints of unfair business practices and acted as a combination ombudsman and consumer advocate. The Health Committee worked with citizen liaison personnel in San Francisco General, and the Police Committee worked with the parallel apparatus in the local Police Departments.

It is within this larger context that we approached and tried to understand the impact of BART and the attendant redevelopment and speculation that was to mobilize the Mission for a fight that was the focus of this study. The BART impact must be viewed within this frame of a large-scale and growing community organization, reaching into a wide range of issues and aspects of community life. BART, the city agencies and big business were merged in one interest group as far as political activists trying to mobilize community response to development were concerned.

By the time the Mission groups mobilized for the fight to re-zone the area to prevent high-rise development, specialization had occurred to the point where the fight was carried out by a coalition of two groups with quite divergent interests. They had come far afield from the vacant lots and litter issues that produced the successful mobilization of the residents in the earliest phase of the political organizing.

#### 4. BART, Redevelopment, and Mission Politics

It should be now clear that BART was only one aspect of political mobilization in the Mission. BART's impact must be framed within the context of this mobilization and its parent ideology of the nature and meaning of "outside interests" and the prevailing characterization of local and regional authorities. Unlike the early local issues of vacant-lot-litter and asphalt-repair, BART was far more meaningful to a specific segment of the proliferated committee structure than to the typical resident. In order to clarify what happened to the political structure of the developing institutions in relation to BART, it is fruitful to review some classical notions about the relationship between the various components of that structure.

Political movements for social change (in technologically advanced societies of the twentieth century) can be seen as having three typical elements: 1) an elite cadre actively engaged on a full time basis in political activity, with social change as their vocation; 2) intermediaries and functioning sympathizers with regular and routine connections to the social world, through their jobs and other commitments, who serve to inform and organize around specific issues; 3) a large mass or constituency. It is then possible to classify political movements by the relationship between these components, their size and autonomy. Some movements, as in the later Mission period, have a variety of political organizations in which the elite cadre are dominant. Other movements, as in Rockridge, have a highly developed and growing intermediary component. We shall review the implications of this distinction after an account of the nature of the political activity of the Mission around BART and its direct and perceived impacts.

It has been noted that the Mission Coalition was quite concerned with increasing the number of jobs available to residents of the community. When BART began construction in the Mission, the Coalition charged its Employment Committee to seek a proportion of the construction jobs on the project, a program that came to be called JOBART. As in many such movements, what started as a request for representation of Latinos and Chicanos in the limited area of BART construction blossomed into demands for roles and positions as station agents, train operators and management, once BART was in operation.

The Coalition had been relatively successful with picketing, petitioning and boycotting of Safeway, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, and a number of other employers. But BART was to prove a more difficult problem because of the letting of contracts to companies on a one-time performance basis. Thus, while chain and local stores might bend to the employment demand for reasons of having (or wanting) to live with the community, the BART contractors and those who let the contracts had little interest in long-range goals. Accordingly, when BART effectively resisted the Coalition and did not accede to demands for jobs allotted

to the Hiring Hall, it did more than verify its reputation as being hostile to local interests. It achieved special status as an alien force with characteristic insensitivities.

Once construction of the station at Mission/24th was underway, the political struggle over land use around this station absorbed major attention from the Mission political organizing elite as well as the relevant and interested committees. This struggle was to involve the largest number of mass participants at both the level of consciousness and collective action for a full year. The participation of many was limited to signing petitions or attending educational slide shows on the nature and meaning of zoning laws. As the language became more technical, the retreat to a clear and symbolic meaning became the more inevitable for the political leadership. Symbolically and empirically, the fight was cast as a struggle not over zoning, but over the fate of a place for the Latin people of the city of San Francisco.

The area's history was celebrated by the political elite. They could and did point out to the residents that the Mission spread out from a core of land around the Old Mission Dolores, settled several hundred years ago by the Spanish. The politicians could call upon a legacy of spiritual and physical community with lengthy roots in the past. As one of the leaders of the community action cadres around the land use question was fond of putting it, this was Mexico just a little over a hundred years ago.

From the standpoint of developing a base and constituency for Chicanos and Latinos, residency, employment, and community could not be separated. It is certainly true that a segment of the Mission regarded BART as potentially acceptable if it provided Mission residents with jobs. These people would not have connected the issues of re-development, high-rises and commerce to BART, had the JOBART not been such a communally perceived failure. But because the Mission was not only organizing around jobs, but around culture, education, and "consciousness," the political elite could point with some success to the cultural and social renaissance of the area. Whereas in the late 1960's, Latin clubs were scattered over several areas of San Francisco outside the Mission, by 1976, only Caesar's in North Beach remained outside the Mission. Meanwhile, the area around Mission/24th is adding new Latino nightclubs, specialty grocery stores, restaurants, business catering to the local community. Mission Street is one of the three busiest arterials in San Francisco. Intermixed with the heavy car, bus, mini-bus and truck traffic are the "cruisers," teenagers who cruise the strip for "action."

In 1966, the San Francisco Planning Commission published a report predicting high-rise development around the two BART stations in the Mission. The Board of Supervisors then passed new height guidelines for the area that allowed for a tripling in the heights of buildings



on existing sites. Two political groups in the Mission with quite different interests decided to combine into a coalition to fight this development. At the time the fight began in earnest in 1974, developers did not need to obtain zoning changes. They could purchase and build within the existing regulations. The burden was on the community groups to organize for re-zoning if they wanted to prevent increased development.

The Ad Hoc Committee to Rezone the Mission emerged in early 1974, and mainly consisted of the Mission Planning Council and La Raza Centro Legal. The Mission Planning Council represented an interest which is characterized by Latino activists as primarily a concern with preserving the charming old housing in the area against redevelopment. This interest is characterized by the Chicanos and Latinos as dominated by Anglos who wish to live in a neighborhood setting with older housing, and in some ways parallels the Rockridge group. However, the distinctly ethnic and working-class character of the larger community is more important than the similarity. La Raza Centro Legal, on the other hand, primarily consists of young law students and other pre-professionals with a strong identification and a political commitment and vision rooted in the same ideology as that of the early group that initiated Mission activism in 1968.

The common interest of the two groups was to halt commercial expansion into residential sections of the Mission. The fear was that big businesses would move into the area, build high-rise office buildings and multi-unit apartment complexes, and drive up property values and rents, as the area increased in attractiveness and value because of the nearby BART station. If Mission Planning was concerned more about the old Victorian houses, La Raza Centro was more concerned about preserving the cultural and political base that might serve as a cohesive and coherent constituency of the drive for social and economic change.

Major opposition to the petition to rezone came from the Mission Merchants Association, who argued for the need for commercial expansion in order to keep businesses in the area. However, there was a split among business and commercial interests in the area. The petition for rezoning included the signatures and support of over forty, primarily smaller merchants within the Mission. In the Mission, as well as in the Rockridge case, a split developed between the larger business and real estate development interests and the smaller community stores and services. Over time, the smaller merchants came increasingly to identify their interests with those of the community advocates for down-zoning the areas. A considerable number of the smaller merchants began to perceive intensive commercial development as a possible threat to their own market base. Some merchants came to accept the political organizers' view that large chain stores and fast food outlets would tend to displace the small family owned businesses in the area. The City Planning Commission ultimately decided for the community-based group requesting

rezoning, and this decision was upheld by an appeals committee of the Board of Supervisors, despite pressure from business and real estate interests in the area.

D. Sustained and Related Political Activity, Modeling, and Spin-Offs

1. RCPC Direct Political Proliferation

Since the downzoning of Rockridge in 1974, major responsibility has been located in the RCPC Design Review Committee. The DRC has acted as a functioning arm of the Oakland City Government. For example, in the beginning of 1974, "7-11" stores asked for a permit to build on the same lot previously requested by Taco Bell. The DRC reviewed the case and recommended that the permit be denied, resulting in withdrawal of 7-11's bid. In this way, RCPC has achieved and can retain control over zoning and development in Rockridge.

With power concentrated in the Design Review Committee, RCPC has become a continuing small organization of concerned professionals. While it is not currently operating as a grass roots organization, RCPC certainly has the potential of re-activating around any large issue. It has been noted that the group has not been able to alleviate traffic problems, or create additional open space, but these issues differ markedly from those of RCPC's previous successes, where an outside force was perceived against which the community could rally. The removal of commercial signs within the neighborhood is another test, and it is not certain that this objective will be accomplished by 1979. Thus, the extent to which RCPC will be able to effect future changes for the community remains to be seen.

However, RCPC has created a new sense of community. Marsha Silverstein, a Rockridge resident of four years, explains,

When I first moved here, I did not know my neighbors and I did not expect to. But, gradually, I have felt that living here is like living in a small town. About eight of the households on this block get together regularly for community breakfasts. It's the most communal experience that I have ever had in my whole life.

In the past year there have been several block parties and tree plantings in Rockridge. RCPC has also been an influential model for other neighborhood lobbying groups in Oakland, such as the Piedmont Neighborhood Improvement League and the Telegraph Avenue Neighborhood Group. The concept of advocacy planning for neighborhoods has become more popular in the past few years and RCPC has set the pattern.

## 2. Political Ramifications and Inter-Connections of RCPC

TANG, the Telegraph Avenue Neighborhood Group, is the oldest sub-organization in RCPC, and represents the most racially integrated neighborhood in Rockridge. However, only a few black people have gotten involved in the organization, and those tend to be middle class. The group's objectives are traffic control, tree planting, parks, home alert, zoning, and block parties. They successfully negotiated with the city to have the number of official trees changed from two to eight, and have planted many of their own on neighborhood streets. The home alert program began many years ago, supported by the police department, from federal funds. Because people were getting mugged, blocks organized and invited the police department to come to a discussion about what to do.

It was very good, because people didn't really know each other, and a lot of the older people mistrusted the younger people. There would be a block captain and the person would usually be the block captain for TANG. (M. Cross)

TANG was very active on zoning in RCPC, and still maintains its own committee to monitor zoning violations in the neighborhood.

We try to catch all things that are posted and one of us goes to the Planning Commission and sees if anything is going before them.

Traffic is a continuing focus of TANG's activities, from the over-use of Colby Street as a major thoroughway, to the need for directional signs to the freeway from Telegraph Avenue, although the City does not always accede to the group's demands.

The Fairview Park Neighborhood Association also continues its activities, since its 1974 downzoning victory. Controlling local traffic volumes and speeds is the current objective, although efforts to date have met with uncertain success.

The board of the lower Rockridge Peralta Elementary School has also been much more active since the emergence of RCPC. Activist white parents, many of them former RCPC members, have joined the Peralta School Board, and enrollment has shifted from 90% to 65% black students. The board has achieved the rescheduling of the school year to a year-round program with 15-day intersessions every 45 days, an advantage for poorer families who must work year-round.

The Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League (PANIL) serves the area to the northeast of Rockridge, outside the focus of RCPC. Started



in mid-1974, PANIL borrowed a lot of RCPC's techniques and fought similar issues, including achieving a city-declared moratorium to stop projected development of a 7-11 store.

The Bateman Neighborhood Association is a Berkeley group serving residents to the north of Rockridge. In the early seventies it became active in negotiations with Alta Bates Hospital, seeking to control the traffic and parking problems created by the hospital staff and clientele, and to influence the hospital's allocation of space and expansion programs. The group has had some minor success in retarding the hospital's acquisition of land in the neighborhood.

The Claremont Elmwood Neighborhood Association (CENA) was formed in 1965 in response to the proposed routing of Highway 13 through Berkeley. The plan called for the freeway to come down Russell Street or Alcatraz Avenue, and for a four lane expressway at the top of Tunnel Road. Robert Holtzapple, current CENA president, says that CENA opposed the idea of putting the freeway through Berkeley, and got the Tunnel Road interchange modified. In 1973, CENA spent three thousand dollars for a study by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill in an attempt to eliminate the interchange. Although they did not achieve this goal, Mr. Holtzapple expects that the study will be useful later in getting any future development of the freeway and interchange diverted from the Claremont Elmwood neighborhood area.

CENA has been successful in negotiating with the University of California to stop commercial use of their football stadium. They also got traffic diverters put up around Emerson School in 1970, and drew up a plan for similar diverters around the city. This plan was later incorporated into the Berkeley Traffic Plan. CENA is now working on a transit plan for the City of Berkeley. The City will soon be creating a new Department of Transportation, and CENA is actively working to have some influence in choosing the new commissioner. The group has offered to help RCPC with its zoning fight and traffic problems. Although RCPC has not worked with CENA on traffic heretofore, their cooperation seems likely and important, since the new Berkeley traffic plan might create more traffic for North Oakland.

### 3. The Mission La Raza en Accion and Mission Planning Council Direct Political Proliferation

The Centro Legal Organization, which is one section of the La Raza en Accion, and the Mission Planning Council have both experienced growth in their activities and potential political influence since their rezoning victory. Mission Planning Council has experienced partial co-optation into the planning process of the San Francisco Planning Department, since, with the election of George Moscone as mayor, the role of neighborhood community groups in official policy making and planning has been consolidated. The Mission Planning Council was

commissioned to do a study of Mission Recreation and Parks space needs, and an investigation of the present status and development needs of the 24th Street Business Area, for the San Francisco Planning Department.

In large part the identification of enduring political transformations emerging from the Mission re-zoning activities must look beyond the Mission to the City as a whole. The Mission Neighborhood representatives are one faction within the San Francisco Association of Neighborhood Groups. Representatives from these neighborhood groups have been appointed to the Board of Permit Appeals and other policy advisory committees of the City of San Francisco. Increasingly, the coalition of the Neighborhood organizations has established itself as a legitimate political lobby whose political clout is competitive with that of advocates for commercial development. Further, this trend has policy implications for other Metropolitan districts outside of the Bay Area. Both the Mission re-zoning and Rockridge Neighborhood activities were aimed at representing the interests of families who defined the central urban area as a community of residence rather than a locus for business or commerce. The integration of the Mission Planning Council into the land use planning activities of the city represents the legitimation and professionalization of organized community advocacy.

The political development of the Centro Legal and La Raza en Accion must be viewed in terms of the long range organizational goals of these groups. Both components of the La Raza organization view their role as one of continuing service to the Latin community in the Bay Area. Their activities, particularly those of Centro Legal, are geared to the day-to-day needs of Mission residents, and their activities do not involve city government matters. They take on individual immigration and civil cases, and other personal legal needs of residents. However, the La Raza organization viewed the re-zoning success as integral to developing local consciousness of the Mission as a neighborhood for Spanish-speaking people which should not be eroded or removed through commercial development or urban renewal. Their success further served to consolidate their image as a multi-faceted community service organization.

The La Raza group is presently engaged in a dialogue with the city regarding the Interim Zoning Controls and a new citywide Residential Zoning Plan. The La Raza groups is viewed now as a legitimate voice for the concerns of the Latin people in the Mission, and uses Latin professionals and students with legal and planning skills to articulate their interests. One important consequence of the re-zoning activities was an extension of La Raza's reach into people's concerns with housing quality and cost.

Political advocacy groups have continually emerged and disappeared within the Mission over the last ten years. La Raza is one of the few groups which has had an enduring presence within the community. Projects which have been more or less dependent upon government funding, e.g., Model

Cities, have come and gone. But La Raza has resisted reliance upon government funds, precisely because of the dependence and future uncertainty this funding tends to create. The participation of La Raza in the re-zoning movement is another dimension of its continuing political role in behalf of social and political change in the Mission. Its role in the re-zoning served to elevate its community status and legitimacy as a voice among the other movements which were dependent upon government funding. In fact, the re-zoning struggle served to validate La Raza's political legitimacy with City Planning decision-makers as well as with community residents.



### III. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

#### A. Differing Levels of Response to Community Mobilization Efforts

Political activism may be distinguished at three levels: 1) An elite or leadership that is relatively fully occupied and committed to the position of leadership, and which often holds formal authority; 2) Part-time activists and organizational functionaries who serve as middle-level conduits to 3) The larger or mass constituency. This group can be called upon to attend meetings and occasionally engages in support for crisis management, such as by displaying their numbers in critical moments, picketing or boycotting.

When middle-class groups mobilize, they are likely to have a relatively large group of part-time activists, and they can rely upon the larger constituency to supply a fluctuating level of part-time activism and voluntary professional skill. Further, during the mobilization period, such political groups are likely to witness a convergence or leveling of the differences between the three elements. The dominant ideology forces the leadership to remain relatively close to the constituency in both style and content of political expression.

When working-class and ethnic minority communities organize, they are more likely to rely upon the elite, a relatively narrow base of part-time activism, and the potential crisis mobilization of the larger constituency. This constriction of the middle level of activism means that there is less routine knowledge of the activities of the leadership, who must in turn engage to a greater extent in interpreting the will and best interests of the constituency.

The nature of this difference can best be explained by a combination of the difference in economic interests between the two constituencies, and the patterned differences in their relationship to bureaucratic forms of organization. In the middle-class community of Rockridge, the majority of the constituency are owners of single-family dwelling units. Their investment in the idea of a community is reinforced by the material investment in property. The working-class minority community is primarily inhabited by renters, occupying multi-family unit buildings. The leadership of the Mission came to formulate the transcendent virtues of community and continuity over and above the less rooted interests of the residents.

This difference explains and produces the more visionary role of the Mission elite. While Rockridge was dominated by the desire to carve out and preserve, the burden of the Mission Coalition (the parent and context of the zoning fighters) was to change the economic and political status of the community.

Over the last eight years the Mission has seen a proliferation of groups of political advocacy on several fronts: economic (jobs, housing), aesthetic-cultural (neighborhood arts), broad based political (Model Cities, Mission Planning) as well as others. In this setting of splintering and divergent political advocacy without visible dramatic change in the economic sphere, the typical resident develops an attitude of detachment. A multitude of needs combined with a multitude of advocates means the non-activist community member is likely to ignore emerging local drives, to confuse the goals of one with another, and to be generally inattentive to specific issues.

In Rockridge, there was no sustained community wide movement prior to the land-use zoning. The development struggle around the Grove-Shafter freeway was a single-issue response. Local residents met their needs primarily through private activities. Thus, we find another theatre of public political indifference. But the indifference was rooted not in the perceptions of the failures of past movements, but in relative social quiescence and the pursuit of the good or better life within the private sphere of familial struggles and concerns in the middle class. The sudden and pervasive threat to the public and shared status of single-family home owners represented by potential development around the Rockridge BART station was sufficient to mobilize a relatively high activism for re-zoning.

In sum, the absence of continuing political advocacy sets the stage for greater visibility when a political movement such as the one RCPC initiated appears. From this perspective, it is instructive to compare the level of mass attendance at community meetings in the two settings. The Rockridge community activities often drew over 200 people and, for crisis mobilization, up to 500. In contrast, the Mission community re-zoning application before the supervisors drew 125 persons both pro and con. Similarly, when questioned about downzoning the Rockridge merchants had a much better sense of what was involved than did their Mission counterparts.

#### B. Community Advocacy and Public Policy

Both Rockridge and the Mission have experienced a renaissance in the last few years. Recent developments have the form of increased community identity among residents, growing numbers of locally based small and specialized businesses, and the vocal commitment to preserve older housing. One lesson to planners is that mass transit need not be linked to high density development, especially in older residential areas. Indeed, BART was a catalyst in the complex of factors that induced the increased community spirit in these two places, albeit as a more negative model to "organize against" than policy makers might have wished. Yet the net effect may amount to a benefit. In Rockridge, local groups now aim at reducing street crime and automobile traffic.

And the organization of political muscle is a direct spin-off of the fight over re-zoning that has just been chronicled and analyzed. In the Mission, both La Raza Centro Legal and the Mission Planning Council continue to concern themselves in the development of public open space and a range of economic and cultural issues.

One clear policy implication is for public planners to actively and routinely seek the counsel of local residents, just as they do that of chambers of commerce and local business people, when decisions to re-zone, develop or locate a mass transit station in or near a given residential area arise. Policy makers may need to establish a program to provide for public interaction in the planning process in order to insure that all segments of the local constituency have a voice. This program should include systems for informing the public of the status and direction of the planning effort, and incorporate a timetable for public review and comment upon planning documents and related materials and evidence. Citizens should be able to offer evidence, and to trace their input through the planning process.

Another finding from the Rockridge and Mission materials which contains a policy implication is that both groups organized against commercial interests and the perceived coalition of developers, planners and authorities. While the San Francisco Planners ultimately turned out to be more sympathetic than hostile to the Mission groups, political mobilization was not based upon this fact. While it is possible that official efforts to mobilize community participation in planning will initially generate a good deal of mistrust and suspicion about their interests and motives for bringing in community groups, study findings support the conclusion that community participation be solicited anyway. That is, the initial generation of hostility and suspicion should be accepted as given, not to be avoided, placated, mitigated, or co-opted by design. It may turn out that mistrust is not present or that the cooptation, avoidance, or mitigation of disharmony is the result of efforts to mobilize community sentiment. But to enter the scene with the goal of avoiding dialogue with local interests would be a mistake. Involving the local community in the planning process is the best guarantee that interests alien to the collectively conceived interests of a community don't simply ride through and over an area with the shibboleth of "development" and the thinly disguised motive of profits to beneficiaries based outside the community in question.

The City Planners in Oakland and San Francisco conceptualized their planning task in relation to neighborhoods and neighborhood groups in very different ways. The Oakland Planning Department described its activities and the basis for its planning decisions in Rockridge as grounded entirely upon professional land use planning criteria and priorities. They neither acknowledged nor appeared to conceive of their office as having a political role involving a choice of options that



would reflect the differing interests of different segments of the area. Rather, they asserted and appeared to believe that decisions regarding Rockridge were fundamentally planning issues, not value decisions, and therefore amenable to objective decision-making according to professional canons of practice.

On the other hand, the San Francisco Planners explicitly recognized and conceived of a process which weighed both planning considerations and political priorities to arrive at decisions on appropriate zoning and land use policies. They admitted that commercial developers' interests diverged from those of local community groups. The planner we interviewed conceived of the office under Mayor Alioto as being at least in part interested in the priorities and interests of neighborhoods in the City, and saw under Moscone a rising attention to the interests and policies suggested by neighborhood groups. According to Burt Crowell, an Assistant Director at MTC, the San Francisco Planning Department has historically been a social advocate and neighborhood-oriented department. In contrast, Oakland represents that side of the planning perspective that views its activities as the exercise of a professional art removed from the particular advocacy issues of the public political realm. From this perspective the work of planners is to draw up designs for land use, create zoning maps and zoning priorities without acknowledged political motives or conscious consideration of whether these plans are acceptable to a broad spectrum of political interests. That is, they are avowedly indifferent to the specific social and political ramifications of their zoning and development strategies.

### C. Policy Implications vs. Action Implications

There is an inherent bias in the notion of "policy implication" that needs to be addressed in these recommendations about political institutions. The idea of "policy" presumes an existing structure that can interpret and administer a set of findings, directives, or goals. In some instances this is obviously true, for policy is tied to those who are in the structural position to make or implement policy. Most people are, of course, not in such a position. Yet these same people have demonstrated the importance and relevance of their concerns, perceptions, and conclusions, even though they may be outside the realm of traditional, professional policy making.

Finding out what community perceptions and conclusions are may relate more to what this paper calls "action," or the mobilization of non-official, non-governmental groups, or constituencies, than it does to conventional planning techniques. Moreover, many important implications get lost when everyone concerned is busily searching for the conduits of existing structures. It may be necessary to re-design the structure to meet the needs and divergent foci of particular communities.

Perhaps the most significant single policy implication of the present research then, is the recommendation that mass transit authorities and planners create and develop an "action" wing or liaison whose function is to monitor and, if necessary, develop local constituencies to organize and mobilize opinion, even if it sometimes counters the interests represented by the policy-makers themselves, and to sustain such local political mobilization.

Local activists have demonstrated the unwisdom of under-emphasizing the need for and importance of this function which should become an integral part of the planning process.

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